



WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS BUREAU

FACT SHEET

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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NARROWBAND PCS FACT SHEET

What is Narrowband PCS?

Narrowband Personal Communications Services (Narrowband PCS) is broadly defined by the Federal Communications Commission as a family of mobile or portable radio services which may be used to provide wireless telephony, data, advanced paging, and other services to individuals and businesses, and which may be integrated with a variety of competing networks. For example, Narrowband PCS could be used for the development of advanced paging systems. For example, pagers may become equipped with a small keyboard allowing the subscriber to both retrieve and send complete messages through microwave signals (e.g. wireless E-mail).

Narrowband PCS uses a smaller portion of the spectrum than Broadband PCS. Narrowband PCS licenses will most likely be used to provide such new services as voice message paging, two-way acknowledgement paging, and other text-based services.

Narrowband PCS is in the 900 MHz band of the electromagnetic spectrum. Three megahertz has been allocated to Narrowband PCS in the 901-902, 930-931, and 940-941 MHz bands.

Potential of PCS

The FCC's auctions of Broadband and Narrowband PCS licenses helped kick off an entirely new communications industry. U.S. consumers will enjoy new and innovative communications services. Analysts estimate that the new PCS industry will generate tens of billions of dollars of future investment and help create hundreds of thousands of new jobs.

PCS ensures that consumers will be able to choose from multiple wireless telecommunications providers, resulting in lower prices and better service overall. Use of PCS services is expected to increase productivity and enhance delivery of products and services. Also, businesses can benefit by providing a supporting role to this new industry in construction of infrastructure, software development, etc.

Narrowband PCS Spectrum Breakdown: Auctions

The Commission has allocated spectrum in the 900 MHz portion of the electromagnetic spectrum to Narrowband PCS. There are more than 3,500 Narrowband PCS licenses.

Narrowband PCS license blocks are divided geographically into nationwide licenses, regional licenses, and licenses covering Major Trading Areas (MTAs) or Basic Trading Areas (BTAs). MTAs and BTAs are geographic areas based on the Rand McNally Commercial Atlas and Marketing Guide. There are 51 MTAs and 493 BTAs in the U.S., including the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Following is a list of the FCC's previous and planned Narrowband PCS auctions:

AUCTION	FREQUENCY	GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN	DATE OF AUCTION
Nationwide	50/50 kHz paired 50/12/5 kHz paired 50 kHz unpaired	11 licenses available	July 25-29, 1994
Regional	50/50 kHz paired 50/12.5 kHz paired	30 licenses available	October 26 - November 8, 1994
Narrowband MTA	50/50 kHz paired 50/12.5 kHz paired 50 kHz unpaired 12.5 kHz unpaired	357 licenses available	TBD
Narrowband BTA	50/12.5 kHz paired. 12.5 kHz unpaired	986 licenses available	TBD
Narrowband Response Channel	12.5 kHz unpaired	2,176 MTA and BTA licenses available	TBD

What Are The Special Provisions for Designated Entities?

In granting the FCC authority to auction licenses, Congress directed the Commission to develop specific provisions to create opportunities for women, minorities, small businesses and rural telephone companies to participate in these auctions. The Commission developed a combination of provisions for the different auctions designed to help these groups, referred to in the legislation as designated entities, to compete in this new industry. The provisions include bidding credits (i.e., discounts on the amount bid) and installment payments.

For further information, phone (202) 418-1400.